ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION

2010-2011

JUNE 2011

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services

Dear Ms. Meilleur:

I am pleased to present this Annual Report on behalf of the Soldier's Aid Commission.

This report outlines the history and mandate of the Commission and summarises its activities throughout the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,

for **J.W. Smith**
Chair

The Commission is committed to ensuring that it provides the best administering mechanism of applications for financial assistance requested by veterans who enlisted in the Canadian armed forces and served overseas in a theatre of war or served with the armed forces in Canada. This assistance is also extended to any dependent relative of any veteran of these wars. Members of the Commission are dedicated to providing a relevant and useful service in the most effective and efficient way.

HISTORY, ORGANIZATION AND MANDATE

HISTORY

The Soldiers' Aid Commission is an Operational Service Agency, established in 1915, "to take care of and to find employment for members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force..."

The Soldiers' Aid Commission receives its legislative authority from the *Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, R.S.O. 1960*, and the *Soldiers' Aid Commission Amendment Act, 1970.*

The Ministry of Community and Social Services, Operations Division, Services and Supports Branch is responsible for the administration of the legislation under which the Commission operates.

ORGANIZATION

The Commission operates at arms length from government. The members are appointed by Order-in-Council and do not have fixed terms of appointment. It is stipulated in the legislation that "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may add such persons from time to time as members of the Commission as he deems advisable or may appoint a member in place of any member dying or retiring or becoming incapable of acting". The Commission selects candidates for Commissioners, recommends appointees to the Minister and elects its Chairperson. These members serve without remuneration but may claim out-of-pocket expenses.

The most recent Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and MCSS was signed by the ministry and the Chairman on October 23, 2006 for a five-year term.

In 2010-2011 the Soldiers' Aid Commission included a Chairperson and seven Commissioners. Sadly in February 2011 the Commission lost Commissioner Herman

Young leaving six Commissioners (see Appendix 2 for Commissioner Biographies).

MANDATE

The mandate of the Soldiers' Aid Commission is to administer applications for financial assistance made by veterans and their dependent relatives. The Commission accepts applications for financial assistance made by veterans in need or their dependents by way of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Army, Air Force and Navy Benevolent Funds. Officials in Veterans' Affairs Canada offices, throughout Ontario, screen the appropriateness of the requests, after which they then make referrals to the Commission.

FUNDING, ELIGIBILITY AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FUNDING

The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides the Commission with annual funding in the amount of $253,200 for payments to veterans and/or their dependent relatives.

In November 2006, the Commission's mandate was extended to include veterans who served with the armed forces in Canada. Along with the mandate extension, the Commission received an additional $100,000.

The ministry provides the Commission with administrative support and meeting room for its monthly meetings in Toronto.

ELIGIBILITY

An eligible veteran is a person who resides in Ontario, enlisted in the Canadian armed forces and served overseas or served with the armed forces in Canada during the First or Second World Wars or the Korean War and is in financial need.

An eligible dependent is the spouse of an eligible veteran with whom the veteran lived at the time of the veteran's death, or as a spouse in a common-law union of reasonable duration.

Assistance may also be extended to a natural or adopted child who at the time of the veteran's death was financially dependent on the veteran or, unable to manage his or her affairs and was a responsibility of the veteran.

The applicant must have insufficient income and assets to pay for the service or the

support he/she is requesting. The Commission employs a screening tool to assess financial need.

Financial assistance is available to resolve a specific problem when all other resources have been exhausted. Funding is provided on an individual basis and is not provided for long-term, ongoing assistance or for the purpose of arranging a funeral. Applications that are declined are usually due to a determination that the individual is "not in true financial need" or that the requested assistance is to meet an ongoing debt.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Commission provides financial assistance under two basic categories: Minor Disbursement Assistance and Major Disbursement Assistance.

Minor Disbursement Assistance:

Minor assistance covers items up to $300.00 in value. Any Commission member or designated employee may approve a request under $300.00

On behalf of the Commission, counsellors in District DVA offices may grant up to $50.00 to eligible veterans without prior authorization, and between $50.00 and $300.00 to eligible applicants with telephone authorization from the Commission. The DVA bills to the Commission on a monthly basis for reimbursement of grants made on behalf of the Soldiers' Aid Commission. These grants are then reviewed and approved at the Commission's Meeting.

Major Disbursement Assistance:

Major assistance includes items and services ranging from $300.00 to $1000.00 in value. The amount may be increased at the discretion of the Commission to avoid unnecessary hardship. All applications for major assistance are reviewed at the Commission's monthly meetings. Those which require urgent attention are approved in a timely fashion and then reviewed at the next scheduled Commission meeting. Financial assistance can only be granted once in any 12-month period.

In the event of an application where funds are required immediately, two commissioners, after considering the eligibility and urgency of the application, may review and approve the application. The application is then discussed at the next Soldiers' Aid Commission meeting.

The Soldiers' Aid Commission provides funds for the following:

- Health related items such as hearing aids, glasses, prescription and dental needs;
- Home related items such as rent, repairs, moving costs, furniture,

replacement/repair of roof and furnace;
- Specialised equipment such as assistive devices, wheelchairs and prosthetics, and
- Personal items such as clothing and other specialised support services.

The decisions to provide assistance to an individual are not subject to approval by the Minister or any official of the ministry, nor are they subject to appeal.

The applications are reviewed at the meeting for approbation or rejection. Once the meeting has been adjourned, cheques are prepared for all approved applications and signed by the Chairperson and a Commissioner or by two Commissioners if the Chairperson is not available.

Please see Appendix 1 for the Commission's 2010-2011 service data.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission's present Memorandum of Understanding expires in October 2011. The Commission plans to sign a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister prior to the expiry date.

Due to the increase in the cost of living and the high cost of many devices that veterans request financial assistance for, the Commission now takes into consideration the approval of up to $2000.00 on an as-needed basis.

The Commission has increased the grant amount for Minor Disbursements from $200.00 to $300.00.

In the past fiscal year the Commission continued to receive inquiries from Area Counsellors and Provincial Officers regarding approval of applications from veterans who have served overseas in peacekeeping roles.

The Commission requested to expand its mandate to include veterans of the Canadian armed forces that served in peacekeeping roles. It was advised that this will require a legislative change.

APPENDIX 1

2010-2011 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Month	Major Applications Received	Minor Applications Received	# Declined	# Approved	Financial Assistance Provided
April 2010	7	0	0	7	$16,206.35
May 2010	16	2	1	15	$13,005.92
June 2010	8	1	0	8	$ 8,315.58
July 2010	10	2	1	9	$ 6,642.52
August 2010	21	0	2	19	$17,216.62
September 2010	8	0	1	7	$ 7,061.54
October2010	9	1	3	6	$ 7,211.81
November 2010	29	2	2	27	$23,787.76
December 2010	13	0	1	12	$12,184.55
January 2011	12	0	1	11	$ 9,362.32
February 2011	19	0	1	18	$17,032.95
March 2011	11	1	1	10	$ 9,220.18
TOTAL	**163**	**9**	**14**	**158**	**$147,248.10**

APPENDIX 2

SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION - COMMISSIONER BIOGRAPHIES

James W. Smith, Chair

Mr. Smith was born in Hamilton, Ontario. He graduated from the Ontario Agriculture College in Guelph. During World War II, Mr. Smith served in the Royal Canadian Navy. He was employed with George Weston Ltd. as a Sales representative for twenty-five years.

Mr. Smith has demonstrated his commitment to his community and to veteran's affairs in many ways. He organized and coached the Shamrock Minor Hockey League for 9 years. He was a member of the Parkwood Hospital Board in London for 9 years and Chairman of the Cancer Society in Lucan, Ontario for 6 years. Mr. Smith was the Master of Irving Masonic Lodge and the National Poppy Chairman. For the Dominion Command, he held the role of Executive Vice-President and sat on their Veterans Services Committee. Mr. Smith was also the National Director for the Royal Canadian Naval Association and the Provincial President for the Royal Canadian Legion.

Mr. Smith has been a member of the Soldiers' Aid Commission since 1986.

Homer R. Brooks, Commissioner

Mr. Brooks served in the Canadian Army Regular Forces and the Reserve Unit; he was also employed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services for over 22 years, the Ministry of Northern Affairs and the Ministry of Correctional Services. Mr. Brooks is presently a Real Estate Broker with REMAX Spirit Inc in Bowmanville.

Mr. Brooks was born in Omemee Ontario and his educational background includes Military Training at the Canadian Provost Corp School, Canadian Army (Reg), Certificate in Correctional Service and Certified Northern Affairs Officer, Ontario Ministry of Northern Affairs and Mines.

Mr. Brooks Community and Professional Organizational Involvement include being a long-standing Legion member of The Royal Canadian Legion, Former President of the Moosonee Lions Club, Fenelon Falls Rotary Club, and member of the Ontario Real Estate Association also school bus driver with Laidlaw Educational Services.

Mr Brooks and his wife Helen live in Oshawa Ontario and is one of the newest Commissioners serving on the Soldiers' Aid Commission.

Alfred H. L. Harris, Commissioner

Mr. Harris is one of the newest Commissioners of the Soldiers' Aid Commission. He was born in Barrie Ontario and lived there until 1959. Mr. Harris served in the Royal Canadian Air Force and has active service as a Radar Technician and Reserve Officer.

His education background consists of Certificate Course in Business from the University of Toronto and Chartered Life Underwriter.

Mr. Harris's employment career has spanned from1946 when he joined the London Life Insurance Company in Barrie to present, being self employed as a Chartered Life Underwriter assisting over 3000 families with Estate Planning.

Mr. Harris has held many executive positions such as President and Chairman with the Canadian Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, The Institute of Chartered Life Underwriters and The Estate Planning Council of Toronto.

Mr. Harris's volunteering spirit has led him to work with many organisations, he was a member of the Metro Toronto Board of Trade for 35 years, The Naval Veterans Association, The Ramses Temple of Shrine and Sheba Shrine Club, The Granite Club, and is very active with the Royal Canadian Legion for over 60 years. He presently resides in Toronto with his wife Phyllis.

Colin Rowe, Commissioner

Colin Rowe was born in Guyana South America and in 1969 at the age of twenty, immigrated to Canada. In November of that year, he joined the Ontario Public Service in what was then the Department of Social and Family Services. Through part-time studies, Mr. Rowe graduated in 1972 from the Social Service Administration program at the former Ryerson Polytechnic Institute.

Until his retirement in November 1999, Mr. Rowe's entire public service career was in the Ministry of Community and Social Services, working primarily in the Income Maintenance program. In 1997 he was appointed Manager in the Ministry's Information Systems Branch with responsibility for implementing systems changes in support of Social Assistance Reform initiatives, and the Year 2000 upgrade and retrofit of the Ministry's Social Assistance mainframe applications.

Mr. Rowe is a thirty-seven year member of the Royal Canadian Legion and served for fifteen years in the Canadian Armed Forces Militia. He retired in June 2002 from his position as the Regimental Drum Major for the Band of the Governor General's Horse Guards, Canada's senior militia regiment, but maintains a busy schedule as editor for several military publications. Upon retiring from the OPS in 1999, he returned to

academia and earned a Music Diploma at Humber College in the Jazz Studies program, graduating in June 2002 with a major in Arranging and Composition. He still performs as a free-lance musician (trombonist) and arranger in the Greater Toronto Area.

Mr. Rowe and his wife Agnes have two adult sons and six grand-children. They enjoy the easy pace of rural life in Bowmanville, where they have resided since 1998.

William C. Seyers, Commissioner

Mr. Seyers was born in Northern Ireland. He served in the Royal Navy as a visual signalman from April 1941 until demobilization in May 1946. He was then employed as a general clerk in Northern Ireland until migration to Canada with his wife and young son in October 1953. He was employed in the private sector in both Montreal and Toronto attaining the position of office manager. He joined the Ontario Public Service in the General Welfare Assistance Branch of the then Department of Public Welfare in January 1967.

In the course of his duties with the OPS Mr. Seyers travelled the province widely as Co-ordinator of Indian Welfare Services, and later in assisting with the implementation of the provincial computer system MAIN and CIMS in co-operation with municipalities. He retired from OPS in April 1986. Mr. Seyers has been a member of the Soldiers' Aid Commission of Ontario since January 12, 1984.

John Stapleton, Commissioner

John Stapleton worked for the Ontario Government in the Ministry of Community and Social Services and its predecessors for 28 years in the areas of social assistance policy and operations. During his career John was the senior policy advisor to the Social Assistance Review Committee and the Minister's Advisory Group on New Legislation. His more recent government work concerned the implementation of the National Child Benefit.

After leaving government in late 2002, John became Community Undertaking Social Policy Fellow at St Christopher House in Toronto in association with Massey College at the University of Toronto. John freelances as a social policy consultant with governments while continuing to work with other diverse interests as the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, and the Toronto City Summit Alliance.

John is a volunteer with St. Christopher House and Woodgreen Community Services of Toronto.

John was most recently Research Director for the Task Force on Modernizing Income Security for Working Age Adults in Toronto and was the co-chair of the working group

associated with this project.

He completed an analysis of the legal aid needs test in Ontario and is currently undertaking an Innovations Fellowship with the Metcalf Foundation on the disincentives faced by multiply-subsidized adults in the Toronto area. He teaches a course on public policy at Schulich School of Business. He is a member of 25 in 5.

John maintains an active interest in the history of social assistance in Ontario.

William Earl Thomas, Commissioner

Mr. Thomas was born in Toronto Ontario. He joined the Army Cadet Corp in 1944 and served until 1947as a Lance Corporal.

Mr Thomas attended Ryerson Institute of Technology where he obtained his Diploma as an Engineering Technician. Over the next 48 years Mr. Thomas worked for four companies in both Technical and Management positions. Mr. Thomas has been a member of the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists (CTE) since 1957. Mr. Thomas demonstrates his commitment to his community by serving as a volunteering with the Rockcliff Nursing Home, St Ninians Anglican Church, Scarborough Recreation and Parks, Wexford Baseball Organisation and the YMCA.

Mr Thomas is actively enjoying retirement he lives in Scarborough with his wife Irena and is one of the newest members of the Soldiers' Aid Commission.